

Reduced Hours

The practice of law is particularly easy to carry out on a reduced hours basis. Don't believe it? Consider the following:

- Until the 1980s, the average attorney worked less than 40 hours per week — a schedule that would clearly be considered "part-time" by today's standards.
- Few attorneys today are available to a particular client or a particular senior partner "full-time." Rather, most attorneys work for several clients, for several partners, or on several projects at once. The attorney is available only part-time for each.

Most attorneys travel on business to client meetings, depositions, hearings, conferences, and the like. They stay in touch with their office, decide what matters need their attention right away, and defer action on the rest until they return to the office.

Senior attorneys often participate in a "phased retirement" whereby they work for fewer clients or on fewer matters, and are in the office fewer hours.

There are a number of ways that attorneys can work a reduced hours schedule. Here are several:

1. An attorney can reduce the number of clients or matters the attorney handles, and cut back on the number of hours or days per week that the attorney is in the office. This approach may be most desirable to attorneys who seek reduced hours for child care or elder care.
2. An attorney can reduce the number of clients or matters the attorney handles, and cut back on the number of hours *per year* that the attorney works. This permits an attorney to work longer hours at the office when required and to take long, scheduled blocks of time off. This approach may be most desirable to attorneys who seek reduced hours for quality of life issues such as travel, education, and athletic competition.
3. Two attorneys can team up and "job share." While this is virtually unheard of in the D.C. legal community, it has been tried successfully elsewhere. Job sharing permits complete coverage for clients and may be well-suited to the 24/7 demands of internet clients.